

The Telegraph

Attend tannery meeting

Many Nashua residents remain concerned about the former Mohawk Tannery site, which seems justified due to the property's proximity to residential neighborhoods and the Nashua River.

After all, this is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site, as tests show the soil contains hazardous materials such as radioactive barium, dioxin and arsenic. The 30-acre parcel is located near the intersection of Fairmount Street and Warsaw Avenue. Also at one time known as Granite State Leathers, the site was home to a plant that produced tanned hides for leather from 1924 to 1984.

During a July meeting with EPA representatives, several residents expressed apprehension about the site. A few carried handmade signs declaring membership in "*The N.E.W. (North-East-West) Nashua Civic Association.*"

Association member Deborah Wall told our reporter organizers are "*extremely concerned about the health hazards that the tannery site poses.*"

At this point, the EPA's preferred cleanup option is to consolidate the remaining sludge left from the tanning plant and encapsulate the contaminated soil. This could cost as much as \$14 million. Another option is to treat the polluted soil onsite at a cost of about \$18 million. The estimated cost of removing the contaminated soil from the site for treatment is \$32 million.

During the July meeting, Alant Schmidt, a longtime Nashuan and former school board member, drew robust applause when he spoke in favor of

having the contaminated materials removed.

“I would encourage anyone, including my wife, to spend the \$14 million or so to permanently remove the materials from the site,” he said, referring to his wife, Jan Schmidt, the city’s Ward 1 alderwoman.

Any of these options is expensive, but having a remediated 30-acre site directly adjacent to the Nashua River offers leaders a variety of redevelopment options, whether it would ultimately lead to commercial, residential or recreational use.

Another meeting, featuring EPA officials and the potential site redeveloper, is set for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the United Way of Greater Nashua office, 20 Broad St.

We encourage those interested in the future of the site to attend the meeting and share their views. Spending as much as \$32 million to remove contaminated material from a site is not something that should occur without significant public input.
